

In advance of May 1 demonstration in Puerto Rico,

Gutierrez writes EPA Administrator (for 2nd time)

and releases documents obtained on the project

□

April 26, 2011

Media Contact: Douglas Rivlin (202) 225-8203

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Washington, DC) – Today, Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) announced the release of hundreds of pages of documents he obtained from federal agencies concerning the so-called "Via Verde" -- or "Green Way" -- a 92 mile cross island natural gas pipeline project in Puerto Rico. The Congressman said he was making good on a promise to the Puerto Rican people he

made during a speech to the House of Representatives earlier this month. Rep. Gutierrez will participate in a march and rally against construction of the pipeline this Sunday, May 1 in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico.

"I am trying to shine a light where there has been too much secrecy," Rep. Gutierrez said. "The way the ruling party in Puerto Rico conducts its business is to consistently duck public scrutiny. But this project is too big, the cost too great and the danger too high for secrecy to prevail, so I am making the information I obtain as public as possible so people can decide for themselves."

The Congressman also reacted to [a letter, made public on Monday](#), from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Chief of Regulatory Affairs in Jacksonville to the Environmental Protection Agency's Caribbean Environmental Protection Division. The strongly-worded letter alleges that EPA regulators have withheld "privileged" information from the Corps and questioning why EPA regulators have apparently reversed their position on the project, saying "We were extremely surprised by the conclusions made by your agency considering that much information is still forthcoming..."

So today, Rep. Gutierrez sent another [letter](#) to EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson reiterating his earlier request for information (in a letter dated April 6, 2011) and requesting a response by close of business on Friday, April 29, saying in part:

The people of Puerto Rico, like all American citizens, expect transparency, honesty, and openness from the federal government as agencies consider matters of vital importance to them. The whole "Via Verde" natural gas pipeline affair in Puerto Rico has been sorely lacking in these vital attributes, which are essential to democracy.

Rep. Gutierrez addressed the pipeline issue from the floor of U.S. House of Representatives on April 14 ([press release and text](#)), noting how normal regulations and procedures have been circumvented for the "potentially dangerous, economically dubious, environmentally disastrous and extremely unpopular project."

At the time, the Congressman announced:

To shine some light on this matter, I have sent Freedom of Information Act requests to every and all federal agencies that have addressed the pipeline project. I will release the results so that the people know who their government is meeting with, what documents exist, and what studies have been done to show the need for this project.

Now he is making good on that promise by releasing documents he has obtained from the US Army Corps of Engineers concerning the project.

The hundreds of pages of documents are being released on the Congressman's website: <http://www.gutierrez.house.gov/> as the documents are coded and uploaded.

The march and rally on Sunday May 1 in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico begins at 10:00 a.m. in front of the offices of Casa Pueblo, an important local environmental watchdog organization (press contact: Arturo Massol -- 787-579-5070). The Congressman is expected to address the rally at approximately 12:30 p.m. ET.

Rep. Gutierrez, who is in California all this week for seven events related to his "Campaign for American Children and Families" national tour on immigration and deportations is flying overnight from Los Angeles to San Juan late Saturday in order to make it to this momentous event on May 1.

#

 [Letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson Regarding Gasoducto - April 26, 2011](#)